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Technical cooperation among developing countries

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HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE ON THE REVIEW
OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
Tenth session
New York, 5-9 May 1997

DRAFT REPORT

Rapporteur: Mr. Sandagdorj ERDENEBILEG (Mongolia)

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with recommendation 37 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries,[1] as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/134 of 19 December 1978, a high-level meeting of all States participating in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was convened at Geneva from 26 May to 2 June 1980 to carry out an overall, intergovernmental review of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) within the United Nations development system. The report of the first session of the intergovernmental body[2] was considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session. In its resolution 35/202 of 16 December 1980, the General Assembly decided to change the name of the high-level meeting to High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries and requested the Administrator of UNDP to convene the next session of the Committee under the same organizational and procedural arrangements as had been made for the high-level meeting.

2. The second session of the High-level Committee met in New York from 1 to 8 June 1981 and its report[3] was considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session. In accordance with the agreement reached at the Committee's second session and endorsed by the Assembly at its thirty-sixth session, the structure of the third session of the High-level Committee consisted of the Committee in plenary meeting and only one working group, and this practice has been followed in subsequent sessions.

3. The third session of the High-level Committee met in New York from 31 May to 6 June 1983 and its report[4] was considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session.

4. The fourth session was held in New York from 28 May to 3 June 1985. Its report[5] was considered by the General Assembly at its fortieth session.

5. The fifth session was held in New York from 18 to 22 May 1987 and its report[6] was adopted on 27 May 1987. The General Assembly considered that report at its forty-second session.

6. The sixth session was held in New York from 18 to 22 September 1989 and its report[7] was adopted on 29 September 1989. The General Assembly reviewed that report at its forty-fourth session.

7. The seventh session was held in New York from 28 to 31 May 1991 and its report[8] was adopted on 6 June 1991. The General Assembly considered that report at its forty-sixth session.

8. The eighth session was held in New York from 25 to 28 May 1993 and its report[9] was adopted on 4 June 1993. The General Assembly considered that report at its forty-eighth session.

9. The ninth session was held in New York from 30 May to 2 June 1995. The General Assembly considered the report[10] at its fiftieth session.

II. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Date and place of the session

10. The tenth session of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries was held in New York from 5 to 9 May 1997.

11. In accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 35/202, the session was convened by the Administrator of UNDP under the usual procedural arrangements.

B. Attendance [as of 7 May 1997]

12. The following States Members of the United Nations participating in UNDP were represented at the session:

Algeria
Argentina
Armenia
Austria
Bangladesh
Bolivia
Brazil
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Chile
China
Colombia
Costa Rica
Cuba
Djibouti
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Fiji
France
Gambia
Germany
Ghana
Guyana
Haiti
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Ireland
Jamaica
Japan
Kyrgyzstan
Lebanon
Lesotho
Malawi
Malaysia
Mali
Mexico
Mongolia
Morocco
Mozambique
Myanmar
Netherlands
Niger
Nigeria
Pakistan
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Republic of Korea
Russian Federation
Saint Lucia
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Singapore
South Africa
Sweden
Syrian Arab Republic
Thailand
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Togo
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Ukraine
United Arab Emirates
United Republic of Tanzania
United States of America
Uruguay
Uzbekistan
Venezuela
Viet Nam
Zambia
Zimbabwe

13. In addition, the representative of the Observer Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, which is also participating in the work of UNDP, attended the session.

14. The following regional commissions were represented:

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

15. The following United Nations bodies were also represented:

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

16. Representatives of the following specialized agencies and related organizations attended the session:

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

World Health Organization (WHO)

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

17. The following intergovernmental organizations, which have received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly, were represented at the session:

Latin American Economic System (SELA)

Organization of African Unity (OAU)

Organization of American States (OAS)

Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

18. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended the session as observers:

Arab Organization for Agricultural Development of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

South Pacific Forum Secretariat

Statistical, Economic and Social Research Institute for the Islamic Countries

19. As proposed by the Administrator of UNDP in his report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session (A/34/415, para. 7), and as approved by the Assembly in its resolution 34/117 of 14 December 1979, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council were invited. The following were represented at the session:

[to be inserted]

C. Opening of the session and election of the President

(Agenda items 1 and 2)

20. The tenth session of the High-level Committee was opened by the President of the ninth session, Mr. Soemadi D. M. Brotodiningrat (Indonesia).

21. Mr. Momodou Kebba Jallow, Permanent Representative of Gambia to the United Nations, was elected President of the High-level Committee by acclamation.

D. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 4)

22. The High-level Committee adopted the agenda (TCDC/10/L.1) and the organization of work (TCDC/10/L.2). A general debate was held in the plenary meetings from 5 to 9 May on items 5, 6 and 7. The Working Group, which began its work on 7 May, was assigned agenda items 5, 6 and 7 for substantive discussion and recommendations to the Committee. For a list of documents considered by the Committee at its tenth session, see annex II to the present report.

E. Election of officers other than the President

(Agenda item 3)

23. The following officers were elected by acclamation:

Vice-Presidents: Ms. M. Patricia Durrant (Jamaica)
Ms. Helen Browne (Ireland)

Rapporteur: Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg (Mongolia)

24. The High-level Committee approved the President's recommendation that Ms. Patricia Durrant (Jamaica) should serve as Chairman of the Working Group. It was subsequently agreed that she should also serve as Rapporteur of the Working Group.

III. REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION

A. Statement by the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

[TCDC/10/L.3/Add.1]

B. Introduction of the reports by the Director of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries - highlights of progress reports

[TCDC/10/L.3/Add.1]

IV. SUMMARY OF THE GENERAL DEBATE

[to be inserted]

V. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

A. Report of the Chairman of the Working Group to the High-level Committee

... At its ... meeting, on ... May 1997, the High-level Committee considered the report of the Chairman of the Working Group to the High-level Committee. In its report, the Working Group recommended the adoption of three draft decisions. The decisions were adopted at the ... meeting. The texts of the decisions (decisions 10/1, 10/2 and 10/3) are reproduced in annex I to the present report.

B. Views expressed following the adoption of the decisions

[to be inserted]

C. Provisional agenda for the eleventh session of the High-level Committee

[to be inserted]

D. Draft report of the High-level Committee

... The High-level Committee authorized its Rapporteur to complete its report, taking into account any amendments or comments received from delegations.

VI. CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

A. Closing statement by the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

[to be inserted]

B. Closing statement by the President

[to be inserted]

Notes

[1] Report of the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, Buenos Aires, 30 August-12 September 1978 (United Nations publications, Sales No. E.78.II.A.11 and corrigendum), chap. I.

[2] Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/35/39 and Corr.1).

[3] Ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/36/39).

[4] Ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/38/39).

[5] Ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/40/39).

[6] Ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/42/39).

[7] Ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/44/39).

[8] Ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/46/39).

[9] Ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/48/39).

[10] Ibid., Fiftieth session, Supplement No. 39 (A/50/39).

ANNEX I

Decisions adopted by the High-level Committee at its tenth session

[to be inserted]

ANNEX II

List of documents before the High-level Committee at its tenth session

[to be inserted]

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Addendum

III. REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION

(Agenda items 5, 6 and 7)

A. Statement by the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

1. In his opening statement, the Associate Administrator of UNDP noted the significant increase in the interest in TCDC and South-South cooperation in the recent past as a strategy for ensuring the effective participation of the developing countries in the emerging global economic order. He referred to the South-South Conference on Trade, Finance and Investment, held in San José, Costa Rica, from 13 to 15 January 1997 and the New Delhi conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries which identified practical initiatives to advance such cooperation. He also referred to the importance placed on South-South cooperation in the reform proposals of the Secretary-General.

2. He stated that the increased interest in TCDC was partly due to the availability of relevant technical capacities in the developing countries, especially in East Asia and Latin America. He indicated that increased levels of growth in the developing countries, coupled with the demographic revolution, which would locate an increased proportion of the world's population in the South, were likely to shift the dynamics of growth to the developing countries making TCDC all the more important as a strategy of development. He also stated that globalization demanded increased cooperation among developing countries so that the less developed among them were not marginalized.

3. He mentioned that in recognition of those developments the High-level Committee at its ninth session had adopted the new directions strategy focusing on such priority issues as trade and investment, poverty eradication, environment, production and employment and macro-economic policy formulation and management; seeking operational integration between TCDC and ECDC; identifying TCDC pivotal countries and involving them in cooperative undertakings with other developing countries; and expanding the TCDC-Information Referral System (INRES) into a multi-dimensional user-friendly information system.

4. Regarding the implementation of the new directions strategy, the Associate Administrator highlighted a number of initiatives supported by the Special Unit for TCDC in respect of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Asia-Africa cooperation in the context of the Bandung Framework for Asia-Africa Cooperation, and cooperation between Latin America and the economies in transition in East Europe and Central Asia. He also referred to other efforts such as the exchange of experiences among small enterprises, replication of successful poverty eradication measures in Latin America and the Caribbean, formation of technical networks on biosystematics in South-East Asia, the Pacific region and East Africa, the establishment of the International Network on Small Hydropower and the support provided to the Group of 77, the South Centre and the Third World Network (TWN) to identify policy options for trade and investment and to enable the developing countries to respond to the challenges and opportunities of globalization.

5. The Associate Administrator stated that the elaboration of the programmatic framework for the promotion of TCDC enshrining the new directions strategy was provided in the TCDC cooperation framework for the period 1997-1999. The framework covered two broad areas of activities, namely, support for sustainable human development and the promotion of TCDC. The effort would be facilitated by the separate allocation of resources for TCDC by the Executive Board and the resources likely to be available under the Trust Fund for South-South cooperation established in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/119 of 20 December 1995.

6. He expressed the hope that the three main reports providing information on implementation of TCDC and its promotion by the United Nations development system supplemented by the presentations to be made by selected delegations on their TCDC experiences would help the High-level Committee to carry out an in-depth review of TCDC and to provide guidance on the subject.

B. Introduction of the reports by the Director of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries - highlights of the progress reports

7. The Director of the Special Unit for TCDC introduced the following three reports submitted for the consideration of the High-level Committee:

(a) Review of progress made in implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the decisions of the High-level Committee and the recommendations of the South Commission (TCDC/10/2);

(b) Progress made in the implementation of the new directions strategy for TCDC (TCDC/10/3);

(c) Consideration of the reports of the Administrator (TCDC/10/4) on implementation of the guidelines for the review of policies and procedures for TCDC and on organizational and supportive arrangements for TCDC.

Review of progress made in implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the decisions of the High-level Committee and the recommendations of the South Commission

8. The report provides an analytical summary of the information received from member Governments, organizations and agencies of the United Nations development system and select intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations on the policies and activities undertaken to promote and apply TCDC during the biennium 1995-1996.

9. Despite internal institutional, attitudinal and resource constraints, TCDC continues to be a modality widely used by developing countries in bilateral, subregional, regional and interregional arrangements. All responding countries recognize the need to foster understanding of the concept of TCDC and its procedures and mechanisms and to adopt effective TCDC policies. Sensitization workshops, strengthening of national focal points and the identification of capacities and needs have received considerable emphasis in most countries.

10. A number of countries allocated significant resources for TCDC activities from their national budgets, and/or UNDP country allocations. This is particularly true of countries such as Benin, Bhutan, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ghana, Haiti, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Seychelles, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, Tunisia, and Turkey.

11. A number of regional institutions such as the Latin American Economic System (SELA), non-governmental organizations such as TWN, as well as intergovernmental organizations such as the South Centre have played an active role in the promotion of TCDC and ECDC.

12. Only three developed countries namely, Austria, France and the Netherlands, have indicated specific assistance in support of TCDC. But many developed countries directly or indirectly support TCDC; Japan, for example, allocated $2 million for South-South cooperation during 1997.

13. In UNDP, an effort has been made by the regional bureaux and country offices to integrate TCDC in national and regional technical cooperation programmes. In Africa-Asia cooperation efforts, Latin America and Commonwealth of Independent States cooperation programmes, regional programmes in Arab states and regional cooperation programmes in Asia and the Pacific, the regional bureaux have played important roles, sometimes initiating and on other occasions supporting cooperation programmes.

14. The Special Unit for TCDC continues to serve as a catalyst and an active partner with national Governments and organizations and agencies of the United

Nations system in promoting and monitoring the global application of TCDC. During the fifth cycle the Special Unit supported in excess of 130 interventions globally in four broad categories of activities: (a) promotion and sensitization; (b) enhancement of national capacities for the management of TCDC; (c) capacities and needs matching exercises and subject-specific workshops; and (d) the sponsorship of studies and evaluations in respect of TCDC activities.

15. Other organizations and agencies of the United Nations development system have similarly played an active role in supporting TCDC, both in terms of articulating approaches to the concept in their respective areas of competence and in executing specific TCDC projects. For example, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has been particularly active in the promotion of South-South trade and finance; the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in supporting Group of 77 initiatives for cooperation; FAO in introducing a specific mechanism for use of technical resources of the developing economies; and ILO, UNFPA and WHO in applying the TCDC modality through decentralization of their operations to the regions and subregions. The regional economic commissions have contributed significantly to advancing South-South cooperation by promoting regional and subregional cooperation in different fields.

16. It is difficult to assess accurately the exact level of resources allocated by the United Nations development system in support of TCDC. However, it is estimated that UNDP allocated approximately $50 million during the biennium 1995-1996.

17. Despite the considerable progress made in recent years in promoting TCDC, a number of policy-related, institutional, attitudinal and procedural problems would need to be addressed if the full potential of TCDC is to be realized. First, many developing countries still need consciously to integrate TCDC as a central element of their national development strategy. Second, they need to put in place appropriate institutional arrangements to support the effective functioning of TCDC focal points with both human and financial resources. Third, considerable attitudinal barriers still need to be overcome. Finally, financing of TCDC would need to be substantially increased by all development partners through allocations from national budgets of developing countries, earmarked aid of donor countries for triangular cooperation and mainstreaming of TCDC in the activities of multilateral donor agencies.

Progress made in the implementation of the new directions strategy for technical cooperation among developing countries

18. The report presents a brief outline of the new directions strategy and identifies initiatives that have been implemented in support of the strategy. Specific examples of such initiatives relate to support provided for the implementation of the small island developing States technical assistance programme; follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in terms of exchange of successful urban management experiences; cooperation between Latin American countries and the economies in transition in East Europe and Central Asia; the replication of successful poverty eradication

experiences in Latin America; and the establishment of bio-systematics networks in East Asia, the Pacific and East Africa.

19. An example of targeting the private sector is the programme of exchange of experiences among small enterprises while the increased links with non-governmental organizations is reflected in the support provided to TWN. These initiatives reflect a conscious strategy of incorporating new actors in the implementation of TCDC. An effort to reorient capacity and needs matching exercises is reflected in the Haiti exercise and the follow-up action in respect of the Bangladesh exercise. The establishment of the International Network on Small Hydropower in Hangzhou province in China represents a noteworthy achievement in the area of the environment. A TCDC/ECDC linkage is also reflected in the support provided to the South-South Conference on Trade, Finance and Investment held at San José.

20. A number of countries have been identified as pivotal countries to serve as catalysts for the promotion of TCDC as envisaged in the new directions strategy. As an important element of the new directions strategy, TCDC-INRES is being updated and expanded into a multi-dimensional user-friendly information system.

21. The TCDC technical cooperation framework for 1997-1999 will serve as the main instrument for implementing the new directions strategy. It will be facilitated by the separate allocation of funds by the Executive Board of UNDP and the setting up by the General Assembly of a Trust Fund for South-South cooperation. The allocation of $2 million by the Government of Japan for South-South cooperation has been used to fund a number of projects.

22. The framework document envisages activities in two broad categories, namely, support for sustainable human development objectives and promotion of TCDC. It also sets out the principles and criteria that will govern the implementation of the various programmes and projects to be carried out within this framework.

Consideration of reports of the Administrator

23. This report is in two parts. The first part deals with the implementation of the guidelines for the review of TCDC policies and procedures by the United Nations development system. The organizations of the United Nations development system have found the guidelines to be effective and they have facilitated the expansion of the use of TCDC. A number of these organizations have benefited from sensitization efforts and decentralization arrangements and many of them are continuing to elaborate these guidelines in accordance with their particular needs.

24. In view of the continued validity of these guidelines, it was decided to acquire more experiences with them before reporting to the Administrative Committee on Coordination. They will, however, be reviewed in the meeting of the agency focal points following the High-level Committee meeting.

25. The second part deals with organizational and supportive arrangements for TCDC. Information on staffing of the Special Unit and the resources available for programming during the biennium is provided. During the 1992-1996 cycle,

the Unit allocated $11.4 million for the funding of various projects. In 1996 it also received an allocation of $2 million from Japan. For 1997-1999 the resource availability is estimated at $16.9 million and additional funds are expected from the Trust Fund for South-South cooperation.